Common Core Standards – Questions and Answers

The Michigan Department of Education has developed this Question and Answer document to answer frequent questions regarding the Common Core State Standards Initiative and Michigan's adoption of the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* and the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.*

For more information, please visit www.corestandards.org.

General Questions Regarding the Common Core Initiative

1. Q: **Who** developed these standards?

A: The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) are leading the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI). Forty-eight states, two territories, and the District of Columbia have joined this state-led process.

To develop these standards, CCSSO and the NGA Center worked with representatives from participating states, a wide range of educators, content experts, researchers, national organizations, and community groups. The final standards reflect the invaluable feedback from the general public, teachers, parents, business leaders, states, and content area experts and are informed by the standards of other high performing nations.

The standards were developed and continually reviewed and revised by groups of experts and K-12 practitioners.

- A Work Group comprised of individuals representing multiple stakeholders and a range of expertise and experience in assessment and curriculum design across the continuum of early childhood through postsecondary education. (Michigan was represented in this group.)
- A Feedback Group reviewed draft documents and provided expert advice. (Michigan was represented in this group.)
- An Advisory Group provided advice and guidance on the initiative. This group included experts from Achieve, Inc., ACT, the College Board, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.
- States and national organizations reviewed and provided evidence-based feedback throughout the process.

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2. Q: **What** has been developed?

A: Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for two purposes -
- College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) provide a common definition of College and Career Readiness.
- Common Core K-12 Standards (CCK-12) provide a progression of knowledge and skill to meet the College and Career Readiness Standards.

And in two general content areas -
- Mathematics
  - K-8
  - High School
- Literacy (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language)
  - K-12 in English language arts

- 6-12 in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

3. Q: **What** do the standards represent?

A: The CCSS represent a -
- Common definition of College and Career Readiness (CCR).
- Common K-12 progression of knowledge and skill to reach College and Career Readiness (CCR).
- K-12 framework for curriculum, instruction, and assessment development.

Michigan's Common Core State Standards Adoption Timeline

4. Q: **When** did Michigan adopt the CCSS?

A: Michigan's State Board of Education adopted the CCSS on June 15, 2010.

5. Q: **How** will adoption of the CCSS impact Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements?

A: Impact on MMC Requirements

Michigan's High School Content Expectations (HSCE) (standards and expectations) define required MMC credits. The HSCE represent a framework for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The adoption of the CCSS will not significantly change the description of the required credits. The MMC course/credit descriptions will be modified, as necessary, to align with the CCSS as adopted. The descriptions will reference both the HSCE and the CCSS. Redundancies will be eliminated. The HSCE will continue to guide course/credit development. Future assessments will reference the CCSS (See "Plans for Assessment" below).

<u>Mathematics</u>
The CCSS for Mathematics organize high school standards, not by grade or course, but by concept/domain (the headings of the CCR for Mathematics), allowing each state to develop course sequences (traditional or integrated). MMC course/credit descriptions will be modified, as necessary, to align with CCSS so that students who meet the MMC requirements for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II will meet the Common Core high school standards.

<u>Content Area Literacy Standards</u>
The CCSS for ELA/Literacy (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language) define college and career readiness across content areas. They are supported by the CCK-12 Standards for English Language Arts as well as by 6-12 (CCR) Standards for Reading and Writing in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

<u>English Language Arts</u>
The MMC requirements for English 9-12 define a unit framework for addressing and meeting the Michigan HSCE (standards and expectations) and grade-level dispositions. The framework will be updated to indicate the CCSS addressed in each section. The CCSS (9-12/CCR) are fully addressed in the HSCE, the unit framework, and the recommended units of instruction. The HSCE provide guidance for unit development that complements and further defines the CCSS.

<u>History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects</u>
The Michigan ELA HSCE define literacy across content areas, with strands 1 and 2 specifically addressing communication (writing, speaking, and expressing) and information access (close and critical reading, listening, and viewing). The 6-12 (CCR)

Standards for Reading and Writing in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects reflect literacy standards addressed in the General Knowledge, Process, and Skills sections of the Michigan Social Studies Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE) (5-8)/HSCE, and in the Scientific Inquiry, Reflection and Social Implications standards of Michigan's Science GLCE/HSCE. Common Core literacy standards for grade 6 and above are predicated on teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects using their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields. It is important to note that the 6–12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are not meant to replace content standards in those areas but rather to supplement them. MDE will update clarification documents to fully reflect the 6-12 (CCR) literacy standards.

6. Q: Will the CCSS for K-8 **replace** the Michigan **K-8 GLCE** for ELA and Mathematics?

A. The CCSS represent a content knowledge and skill progression that will inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment development. The CCK-12 standards for ELA/literacy and for mathematics include the content and skills described in the GLCE. The GLCE will continue to inform the MEAP assessments (until a new balanced assessment system aligned to the CCSS is in place in 2014-15). Grade level guidance documents (e.g., focal points in mathematics, unit development supports in ELA, parent documents) will be updated as necessary to reflect the CCSS and may include statements from the GLCE as appropriate.

Plans for Assessment

7. Q: What will happen to MEAP and the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) now that the CCSS have been adopted?

A: At this time, the Common Core State Standards have been developed to address only ELA/Literacy and Mathematics. Therefore, there will be no impact on MEAP Science or Social Studies. Michigan has joined a consortium of states that will develop common assessments to assess the CCSS for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics. It is anticipated that these common CCSS assessments will replace MEAP and MME for ELA and Mathematics in 2014-15. Until that point, the MEAP and MME ELA and Mathematics assessments will continue to be based on the current GLCE and HSCE.

8. Q. What will happen to MEAP-Access and MI-Access when/if the CCSS are adopted?

A. The Common Core State Standards are only being developed to address general assessments. Modified assessments will continue to be developed by states. However, since the content standards for ELA and mathematics have changed, MEAP-Access and MI-Access Mathematics and ELA would need also to be based on the CCSS (or extensions of the common core for MI-Access).

Implementation

9. Q: How will MDE support the transition to the Common Core State Standards?

A: MDE will support the transition to the CCSS beginning with rollout sessions designed to introduce the CCSS and to help districts analyze and align their current curricula, units of instruction, and assessments with the CCSS. MDE will work with its partner organizations (ISDs, regional literacy and math/science centers, professional organizations, and university educators) to provide ongoing professional development that supports the transition. Four regional rollout sessions (face-to-face large group sessions) will be offered in October and November 2010. Rollout materials and support

documents will be available in electronic form for use by ISDs and local districts. Watch for a podcast of Superintendent Flanagan introducing the CCSS, with dates and registration information for CCSS rollout sessions.

10. Q: When will districts/teachers be expected to implement the Common Core State Standards? When will schools be responsible for teaching the knowledge and skills reflected in the Common Core State Standards?

A: Michigan's policy on implementation provides for a transition to new standards with one year of planning and adjustment of curriculum, instruction, and local assessment. The development of state large-scale assessments that reflect new standards usually takes two to four years.

The Common Core State Standards align closely with current Michigan GLCE and HSCE. District curricula and assessments that provide a K-12 progression for meeting the MMC requirements will require minimal adjustments to meet the CCSS, allowing for curriculum and assessment alignment in SY10-11 and implementation during SY11-12 or sooner.

Districts that have not yet developed curricula and assessments that provide a K-12 progression for meeting the MMC requirements may find that more substantial adjustments will need to be made to meet the CCSS. These districts will be expected to align curricula and local assessments during SY10-11, transitioning to CCSS in SY11-12, with full implementation in SY12-13.

MDE and its partners will provide assistance with the transition to the CCSS through rollout and implementation support sessions and ongoing professional development opportunities. Transition plans will need to address points at which content and skills addressed in the CCSS may vary from the expectations assessed on the MEAP and MME. During the transition, some content and skills may need to be taught in more than one grade until the new assessment system is in place in 2014-15.

Next Steps

11. Q: Do the CCSS represent national standards? Will they lead to a national curriculum and common national assessment?

A: The Common Core State Standards Initiative is being led by states, not by the U.S. Department of Education. The CCSS will allow for development of common assessments that may be adopted by states. Such common assessments may provide opportunities for evaluation of progress toward college and career readiness.

Decisions about development and adoption of common curricula and assessments will continue to be left to state boards of education. Some states may decide to participate in the development and adoption of a common curriculum (definitions that go beyond standards and include units of instruction or required activities, problems, or readings). The CCSSI has developed standards which will be adopted by states and used as the framework for developing state-level curricula and assessments. Participation in the CCSSI does not require that states adopt a common curriculum or that they participate in one common assessment.

Benefits of CCSS Adoption

12. Q: What are the benefits of adopting the CCSS?

A: Standards cannot single-handedly improve the quality of our nation's education system, but they do give educators shared goals and expectations for their students. For example, the Common Core State Standards will enable participating states to work together to:

- Make expectations for students clear to parents, teachers, and the general public.
- Encourage the development of textbooks, digital media, and other teaching materials aligned to the standards.
- Develop and implement comprehensive, balanced assessments to measure student performance against the Common Core State Standards that will replace the existing testing programs that are difficult to compare across the country and often do not provide educators with enough information to make timely decisions that positively impact instruction.
- Evaluate policy changes needed to help students and educators meet the standards.

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